



"IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHO WE ARE . . ."
first eight words of Act 1 – THE MIKADO

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Houston began as a simple gathering of friends in 1951. After just a few months of sing-alongs and readings, the group decided to take their enjoyment public. Thus on a warm July night in 1952, with a small orchestra and simple costumes, *THE GONDOLIERS* was presented in the Cullen Theater at the University of Houston. Seated among the surprisingly sizable audience was a reviewer from the Houston Chronicle, who suggested a Gilbert & Sullivan comic opera become an annual event!

Every July since, the Society has presented one of the Savoyard titles to an ever-growing audience. Over the years the venue has changed and number of performances has been expanded. Currently the Society presents six performances over the course of two weekends at the beautiful Wortham Center in downtown Houston.

The Society's orchestra, Musical Director, Stage Director and technical staff are now all paid professionals. The cast, however, while including many professional singers, remains an all-volunteer cast that performs out of love for the Society and the delightful music and comedy of the Gilbert & Sullivan repertoire!

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Houston has long been widely recognized as a pre-eminent community-based theater company receiving an Emmy-nomination for its 1974 PBS-televised production of *PRINCESS IDA* and six "Best of Festival" awards, including International Champions, at the 2004 International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton, England. The total number of nominations and awards received by the Society over its three successful trips to the Festival in Buxton make it the most honored Society ever to attend the event –including those British Societies and Guilds that attend every year!

In addition to awarding annual scholarships to local voice students, the Society provides banks of tickets to less-privileged children in the Houston area who might otherwise not have the opportunity to experience the magic of high-caliber live theater.

Since its official inception in 1952, the primary goal of the Society has remained unchanged - provide top-notch live-theater productions, in the true spirit of family entertainment, at a price that families can afford. All ticket revenue, and most non-scholarship funding, is applied to that single goal. The Society remains proud that grandparents can bring their grandchildren to its shows and they can all laugh at the same jokes and hum the same tunes.

May the tradition continue for years and years to come!